

Babies Were Born To Be Breastfed!

National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign Update

The anticipated launch of the National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign took place June 4.

Representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Ad Council are meeting with members of the press to announce that campaign materials (public service announcements intended for newspapers, magazines, billboards, radio and television) have been forwarded to media outlets throughout the United States in advance of today's announcement.

The United States Breastfeeding Committee applauds the efforts of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office on Women's Health, and the Ad Council in pursuing a national campaign that delivers the clear message that babies exclusively breastfed for six months are less likely to develop a variety of acute and chronic diseases including diarrhea, ear infections, respiratory infections, and obesity.



The launch of the campaign coincides with the release of the findings from two studies lending further support to the important relationship between breastfeeding and infant health. A study published in the May issue of Pediatrics shows a small, but significant, association between breastfeeding and a decreased risk of death in infants between 28 days and 12 months of age. A second study published in Diabetes / Metabolism Research and Reviews shows that longer exclusive and total breastfeeding appear to be an independent protective factor against Type-1 diabetes.

These and numerous other studies clearly show that breastfeeding is an important public health issue, one that significantly impacts both women and children. Given the social and cultural barriers to breastfeeding that exist today, it is only through broad-based initiatives like the National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign, that social and cultural change can be effected. If the Healthy People 2010 goals for the nation are to be achieved, it will require the cooperation of every individual who influences a mother's decision to breastfeed—employers, co-workers, child care workers, health care providers, and policy makers.

How you can help:

- Contact your local media outlets to ensure that a media kit containing the campaign ads has been received.
- Identify strategies for giving the campaign local roots and significance.
- Raise awareness about breastfeeding issues specific to your community e.g. child care, employment, school. *Help media outlets identify the benefit of supporting breastfeeding. *Provide the community with local resources and services.

You can view each of the campaign ads by visiting the website of the Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health <http://www.4woman.gov/>.